



## Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

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## Policy Statement

At Carisbrooke College, we recognise that emotional wellbeing and mental health are essential to success in learning, relationships, and life. The WHO constitution states:

*"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." An important implication of this definition is that mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities. Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Mental health is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world. (World Health Organisation)*

We are committed to developing a mentally healthy school where every student and staff member feels valued, supported, and empowered. Our aims are to:

- Foster a positive, inclusive, and respectful school culture
- Proactively promote emotional wellbeing for all
- Identify and respond early to signs of mental health needs
- Work in close partnership with parents, carers, and external professionals

This policy sets out our approach to promoting positive mental health and supporting those experiencing mental health difficulties.

## Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and reduce stigma around mental health
- Identify early warning signs of mental health issues
- Provide support for students, staff, and families affected by mental ill-health
- Create clear systems of referral, intervention, and signposting.

## Whole-School Approach

Mental health is embedded into our ethos, curriculum, relationships, and daily practices. Our whole-school approach includes:

- A comprehensive PSHE curriculum (including the Jigsaw Programme)
- Regular wellbeing assemblies and awareness events
- Promoting the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, Give
- A culture of openness where conversations about mental health are encouraged
- A safe and nurturing physical environment

## Key Staff Roles and Responsibilities

While all staff play a role in promoting student wellbeing, the following individuals have specific responsibilities:

- Headteacher: Ms Natalie Sheppard
- Deputy Headteacher: Ms Karen Begley
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Committee:
  - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mr Michael Peake
  - Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL): Ms Beth Peckham
  - Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Kirsty Dunn-Coleman
- PSHE Lead: Mrs Jane Benton

The Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL) is responsible for coordinating support, developing the policy, liaising with external agencies, and ensuring that staff are trained appropriately.

## Recognising Early Warning Signs

We encourage all staff to be vigilant to changes in student behaviour and wellbeing. Early signs may include:

- Withdrawal or social isolation
- Changes in mood, appetite, or sleep
- Declining academic performance
- Risk-taking behaviours or unexplained injuries
- Expressions of hopelessness or low self-worth

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental. The established safeguarding processes and protocols should be carried out by staff. Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to the DMHL, Form Tutor or Head of Year in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures (logging on My Concerns) should be followed with an immediate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding Officer, Headteacher or member of SLT. If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary. Where a further referral to an external agency is appropriate, this will be led and overseen by the DMHL.

## Teaching about Mental Health

Mental health education is delivered through:

- The PSHE curriculum (via the Jigsaw Programme): mental health education is embedded within PSHE lessons and form tutor time. Topics include emotional literacy, coping strategies, and understanding mental illness
- Assemblies and themed awareness weeks
- Tutor activities tailored to age-appropriate themes and needs

We aim to equip students with the skills, understanding, and confidence to look after their mental wellbeing, seek help when needed, and support others safely.

## Supporting Students

Support is tailored and may include:

- Pastoral mentoring and support from Form Tutors and Heads of Year
- Access to the Mental Health Support Team (MHST)
- Transition support
- Peer mentoring or support groups
- KS4 Exam Stress workshops
- Early Help Assessments (EHA)
- Referral to CAMHS, IOW Youth Trust, No Limits, Barnardo's, or other external services
- Personalised support plans and reasonable classroom adjustments
- Creative Outlets: the use of art, music, drama and sports as platforms for students to express their emotions and relieve stress
- Career Guidance: we ensure students have access to high-quality career advice to reduce anxiety about future pathways

We take a trauma-informed, student-centred approach, focused on building trust and resilience.

## Working with Parents/Carers

Where it is appropriate to involve parents/carers, we:

- Approach discussions with compassion, clarity, and patience
- Provide clear next steps and sources of support
- Recognise that responses may vary and provide follow-up meetings when appropriate
- Keep accurate records of conversations and plans for next steps

We also signpost to trusted sources of support for parents, e.g. IOW Youth Trust parental support services.

## Supporting Peers and Friends

Students often want to help friends experiencing difficulties. We aim to:

- Educate students on how to listen supportively and safely
- Discourage taking on responsibility for others' mental health
- Provide information about how and when to seek adult help
- Offer peer mentoring opportunities with supervision and training

## Staff Wellbeing and Support

We value our staff and are committed to their wellbeing through:

- Effective line management and regular staff surveys to monitor workload management, staff feedback and wellbeing
- Mental Health First Aiders in school
- Access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Supportive return-to-work procedures
- Headteacher liaison with unions
- Signposting to PSHE and SEMH training
- CPD and pastoral support for staff working with vulnerable students

Staff are encouraged to speak openly about wellbeing and seek support when needed.

## Staff Training and CPD

All staff receive training in:

- Recognising and responding to mental health issues
- Effective safeguarding practices
- Mental Health First Aid (for key staff)

Additional CPD is available based on staff needs or emerging student issues. Staff can approach the DSL for training opportunities or requests.

## Signposting Support

We ensure that students, families, and staff are aware of available support services, including:

- In-school support (pastoral teams, MHST, DMHL, safeguarding team)
- Local services (e.g. CAMHS, Barnardo's, Early Help)
- National services (e.g. YoungMinds, Kooth, Childline, Samaritans)

We publicise support through:

- Mental Health Noticeboard
- Displays in tutor rooms, corridors, communal areas and toilets
- Promotion of relevant websites and events through the use of regular parent newsletters, and the school's website and social media channels
- 'Feel Good Friday' feature: a bespoke weekly mental health focus in parent newsletter and on school's website and social media channels
- PSHE lessons and assemblies
- MHST support at wellbeing assemblies, Parents' Evenings and Transition events

When signposting, we ensure that information is clear about:

- What help is available
- Who it is for
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What to expect next

## Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy aligns with statutory guidance, including: Department for Education's "Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools" guidance, Ofsted's framework for personal development, behaviour, and welfare, and the Equality Act 2010 obligations to support students with mental health challenges.

By fostering a culture of openness, providing timely support, and equipping students and staff with the tools they need, Carisbrooke College is committed to ensuring that mental health and wellbeing remain at the heart of our school community.

The Designated Mental Health Lead will review this policy annually in consultation with students, staff, parents, and governors.